

VZCZCXRO1625
RR RUEH DU RUEH GI RUEH JO RUEH MR RUEH PA RUEH RO V
DE RUEH NJ #0591/01 1131734
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 231734Z APR 06
FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3609
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE
RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUEHBP/AMEMBASSY BAMAKO 0602
RUEHGI/AMEMBASSY BANGUI 1155
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1323
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY 2626
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1711
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 1110
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0711
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0690

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 NDJAMENA 000591

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF, AF/C, AF/SPG, D, DRL, DS/IP/ITA,
DS/IP/AF, H, INR, INR/GGI, PRM, USAID/OTI AND USAID/W FOR
DAFURRMT; LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICAWATCHERS; GENEVA FOR
CAMPBELL, ADDIS/NAIROBI/KAMPALA FOR REFCOORDS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [CD](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: DARFUR REBEL LEADER COMFORTABLY HOUSED IN CHAD

REF: NDJAMENA 300

NDJAMENA 00000591 001.2 OF 003

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Darfur rebel leader Khalil Ibrahim received the Ambassador April 22 at his temporary quarters in Ndjamena (home belonging to President Deby's half-brother) and expressed unhappiness at the negotiations in Abuja and, in particular, the close relationship between the Americans and rebel leader Minni Minawi. He dismissed reports of JEM's involvement in supporting Chad in its fight with Chadian rebels or in recruiting in the Sudanese refugee camps in Chad. He said JEM would accept a UN force in Darfur once a peace agreement was in place. He sought to dissociate himself from impressions that he was close to Turabi. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Ambassador Wall called on Khalil Ibrahim, leader of the Justice and Equality Movement, April 22. He had moved out of the Meridien Hotel into a large house (in the up-scale, "Zaghawa" part of Ndjamena) owned by Timan Deby, Sultan of the Bideiyat Zaghawa in Bahai and half-brother of President Idriss Deby Itno. A large number of white-robed men milled about in the courtyard, presumably Zaghawa followers of Khalil or the Sultan or both. (Comment: Khalil's presence in this comfortable house speaks volumes to his metamorphosed relationship with Deby, as well as to the apparently close relationship he enjoys with the larger Bideiyat community. Khalil fled Sudan to Ndjamena in March 2001, only to be told to leave Chad in July 2001 in advance of a state visit by Sudanese President Bashir in August 2001, and Khalil was not allowed to return to Ndjamena until January 2006. He has made up for lost time. End Comment.)

¶3. (SBU) The Ambassador asked when Khalil had left Abuja, when he was going back, and how negotiations were going in Abuja, considering that the peace agreement was to be concluded by the end of April. Khalil said he had come to Ndjamena only in recent days from Abuja and he might or might not return to Abuja soon, depending on whether there were any progress there. Since he had last seen the Ambassador in February (reftel) he had traveled to Libya, Ethiopia, and Congo-Brazzaville, but he had mostly been in Abuja. In fact,

he said, he did not perceive that there had been much progress in the negotiations since he had last seen the Ambassador. On several vital issues there had been no give on the part of the Sudanese government (Darfur as one region, Darfurian vice-president, Darfurian role in the Khartoum regional government, adequate Darfurian participation in the Cabinet, adequate compensation for the Darfurian people, reconstruction of Darfur, increased revenues to regions, paying Darfurian soldiers' salaries and logistics).

¶4. (SBU) Khalil said that fixing a date (end of April) and trying to force an agreement would not bring peace. The list constituted a bottom line not merely for JEM but for the Darfurian people. If the agreement did not give the Darfurians the minimum they required, they would turn on the rebel movements and condemn them, asking, "You started a war for this meager result?" Khalil said the fighting men in the field would not accept such an agreement. The way the negotiations were heading, he said, would give the Darfurians no clout in Khartoum with which to enforce the terms of the agreement. Look at the trouble the Southerners were having enforcing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, even with a First Vice President. Khalil commented that everyone was overestimating Taha's role. He had seen Taha in Tripoli and was surprised at how much lesser a man he was. "The Ali Osman of today is not the same as the one of Naivasha. The government in Khartoum then was more coherent, today it is divided."

¶5. (SBU) Khalil complained that the United States was putting too much reliance on SLM leader Minni Minawi. Minni had previously been the most powerful rebel leader "in the camps," but times were changing and he was no longer as powerful. The Americans were wrong to concentrate on one rebel leader, because a peace agreement with one rebel leader would not produce actual peace on the ground. Meanwhile,

NDJAMENA 00000591 002.2 OF 003

Khalil claimed that rival SLM leader Abdel Wahid had no power base remaining in Darfur and nowhere to go (no relations with Eritrea, Libya, or Chad), so he was just hanging on uselessly in Abuja.

¶6. (SBU) The Ambassador asked whether the JEM were assisting the Chadian forces in combatting Chadian rebels based in Darfur. Khalil said that, no, JEM had not helped Chad in fighting. However, if Deby now requested such help, JEM would provide it. In fact, next time, the JEM would not wait to help out. Any prospect of the fall of Deby's Chad to Sudan and its allies would be disastrous for Darfur. Khalil had seen Deby the day before to congratulate him on the victory April 13 (when a rebel force made its way all the way into Ndjamena). Khalil said that Sudan had underestimated the capability of the Chadian armed forces. It had thought it could use Mahamat Nour to do the "rough work" after which Arab fighters would come in to clean up and take over. Sudan had already set the janjaweed in motion to clear out "Africans" from the Chadian border area and resettle there. It had pulled together a force for this invasion of Ndjamena, mainly from Chadians long settled in Sudan (including Masalit and Tamas that had settled in the Gezira generations ago). It now had a large force of Arabs at Wadi Saleh south of Zalingei, ready to follow if Mahamat Nour could pave the way into Chad. However, the failure at Ndjamena had set Sudan to thinking again. Deby had not fled and his forces had not folded. And the JEM would help as necessary.

¶7. (SBU) The Ambassador asked whether JEM had been engaged in recruiting soldiers from the refugee camps in Chad. Khalil said JEM did not need to recruit, as it had soldiers enough already. The Ambassador asked his version of events when JEM entered the Sudanese embassy in Ndjamena two days previously. Khalil said that the newspaper accounts, suggesting a violent confrontation, were entirely wrong. JEM had entered the compound peacefully and met the outgoing Sudanese ambassador, talked to him in a normal manner, and

did no one any harm.

¶18. (SBU) The Ambassador asked Khalil's view on a UN force to impose a peace in Darfur. Khalil said that JEM would accept a UN force, but only if peace were first established. Darfur, in fact, needed an international force, to protect the IDPs and enforce the peace agreement. Most of the land was still controlled by the janjaweed, especially in the Masalit domain, and a UN force would be essential to getting them their rights to land. However, so long as Sudan continued to block a peace agreement, it would be a mistake to bring in a UN force. (Note: Khalil's language was markedly less violent against a UN force than it had been two months ago -- but the bottom line remained the same. End Note.)

¶19. (SBU) One of Khalil's aides strongly complained to the Ambassador that the United States was not doing enough to put pressure on Sudan, and he lamented that JEM did not have a good enough relationship with the United States. Indeed, JEM did not have enough friends. Chad was coming along, and Libya was "reasonable," but JEM needed more. Khalil angled for an invitation to the United States.

¶10. (SBU) Khalil regretted that the United States had got the idea that he was close to Hasan al-Turabi. Once such ideas took hold, they were difficult to uproot and he had been slow to recognize the problem. In fact, once peace was achieved, JEM's next battle would be with Turabi. People from all the marginalized corners of Sudan would flock to the JEM, and Turabi and the rest of the old dragons (Sadiq al-Mahdi, Mirghani) would see JEM as a huge threat. In fact, JEM would definitely rule Sudan. Sudan was not a majority Arab country but a majority African country, and JEM would meet the aspirations of the marginalized African majority. Khalil said that his agenda was not religious. He sought a liberal democracy that would deemphasize the army and emphasize development. It would seek equal distribution of resources as had been done in Cuba. Turabi's language was of

NDJAMENA 00000591 003.2 OF 003

religion and nationalism, a nationalism that had subjugated the African majority.

¶11. (SBU) Khalil lamented that there was inadequate international attention given to the Darfur crisis. The international community had given much more support to resolving the crisis of Southern Sudan, to include even a meeting of the UNSC in Nairobi to ensure finalization of the comprehensive peace agreement. The Ambassador said that in its much shorter span, the Darfur crisis had engaged the international community, and certainly the United States, as intensely as the Southern crisis had. Poloff pointed out that mediation of the Darfur crisis had engaged the African Union (vice IGAD), and the main problem lay in the absence of a figure comparable to John Garang on the rebel side. Khalil made no riposte, but rather repeated his complaint that the United States was putting too much emphasis on Minni Minawi.

¶12. (SBU) Comment: Khalil has the air of someone who has been pushed aside in the negotiations and is debating how to regroup. He may have damaged his relations with Libya over the affair of the Sudanese embassy (now overseen by the Libyans), but it does not appear that he has damaged the rapidly improving relations with Deby. He has cottoned on to the fact that being seen as being close to Turabi is not good public relations. He is eager for closer contacts with the United States, though he has not quite mastered the vocabulary to please the American ear. He harbors what appears to be a serious, if ridiculous, national ambition. End Comment.
WALL